

Amendments to the Specification

Please replace the paragraph beginning on pg. 1, line 15, with the following paragraph:

*P21*

The Internet comprises a vast number of computers and computer networks that are globally interconnected through communication links. The connected computers presently communicate with each other via a set of protocols called TCP/IP (Transmission Control Protocol/Internet Protocol). An especially popular aspect of the Internet is the World Wide Web ("WWW" or "Web"), which is a collection of interlinked documents. These documents or "web pages" may incorporate text, graphics, audio, and/or video content, and may include links to one another, often called "hyperlinks." The WWW service allows a server computer system (i.e., Web server or Web site) to send web pages, stored on a server-side storage medium, of information to a remote client computer system. The remote client computer system can then display the web pages via a web browser, a software application that typically resides on the client computer system. ~~Two of the more popular graphical web browsers available include Microsoft's Internet Explorer and Netscape Communications' Netscape Navigator.~~

Please replace the paragraph beginning on pg. 2, line 16, with the following paragraph:

*P22*

Because of its ease of use and visually appealing interface, the WWW is especially conducive to conducting electronic commerce. Coupled with the global penetration of the Internet, online vendors are provided with the capability to effortlessly retail their products globally to shoppers, or buyers, using an online shopping system. Online shopping systems enable vendors to creatively display and describe their products, or merchandise, to potential shoppers. These systems allow shoppers to browse through a vendor's online store to identify products of interest, to obtain specific product information and to electronically purchase products after reviewing the product information. Due to its electronic nature, the selection of various products by shoppers is often based on a virtual "shopping cart" model. When a shopper selects a product or products for purchase, the server computer system metaphorically adds that item to the online shopping cart. When the shopper is finished selecting products, the products placed in the online shopping cart are then "checked out" (i.e., ordered) when the shopper provides payment and shipping information. For these reasons, many electronic commerce ("e-commerce") applications and servers have been developed through which vendors may advertise and sell their products to shoppers.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on pg. 10, line 7, with the following paragraph:

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A computer-usable carrier medium is also contemplated herein. The carrier medium may be a storage medium, such as a magnetic or optical disk, a magnetic tape, or a memory. In addition, the carrier medium may be a transmission medium, such as a wire, cable, or wireless medium along which data or program instructions are transmitted, or a signal carrying the data or program instructions along such a wire, cable, or wireless medium. The carrier medium may include program instructions executable on a computational device. The program instructions may include first program instructions executable for determining an inventory status of at least one product being considered for purchase by a buyer and second program instructions executable for informing the buyer of a change in the inventory status before any purchase of the product by the buyer. The first program instructions may further be executable for determining an inventory quantity of the product and for determining an aggregate quantity of the product currently being considered for purchase by all buyers. The first program instructions may also be executable for generating a first notification quantity value by applying a conversion rate factor to the inventory quantity and generating a second notification value by applying a safety margin factor to the first notification quantity value. The second program instructions may further be executable for informing the buyer if either the first or second notification quantity value if is equal to or greater than the aggregate quantity. The second program instructions may also be executable for selectively informing the buyer based on a ranked profile of the buyer and for informing the buyer that the product may not be available for shipment if the product is not purchased within a specific timeframe. The second program instructions may further be executable to inform the buyer using a communication means as described above.

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